

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system in an automobile, said automobile having front speakers and rear speakers that communicate with a passenger compartment, a front seat and a rear seat being disposed within said passenger compartment, said method comprising the steps of:

selectively operating said partitioned audio system in one of a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation, said first mode of operation being when a single audio source is emitted from said front and rear speakers to generate a desired sound pressure level within said passenger compartment, said second mode of operation being when the first audio source is emitted from the front speakers to generate the desired sound pressure level within the passenger compartment, the rear speakers are off, and a second audio source is emitted from personal sound sources for passengers in the rear seat;

wherein, when said partitioned audio system is switched from said first mode of operation to said second mode of operation, a transition phase is entered whereby an output level of said front speakers increases while an output level of said rear speakers decreases.

2. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 1, wherein outputs of said front and rear speakers are controlled during the transition phase such that the sound pressure level at an area adjacent the front seat is relatively constant.

3. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 1, wherein said transition phase is a first transition phase and, when said partitioned audio system is switched from said second mode of operation to said first mode of operation, a second transition phase is entered whereby an output level of said front speakers decreases while an output level of said rear speakers increases.

4. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 2, wherein said transition phase is a first transition phase and, when said partitioned audio system is switched from said second mode of operation to said first mode of operation, a second transition phase is entered whereby an output level of said front speakers decreases while an output level of said rear speakers increases.

5. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 3, wherein outputs of said front and rear speakers are controlled during the first and second transition phases such that the sound pressure level at an area adjacent the front seat is relatively constant.

6. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 1, wherein the amount said front speaker output increases during said transition phase is predetermined.

7. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 5, wherein the amount said front speaker output increases during said first transition phase is predetermined.

8. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 1, wherein the amount said front speaker output increases during said transition phase is tuned to characteristics of the automobile.

9. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 1, wherein the amount said front speaker output increases during said transition phase is tuned to characteristics of the automobile.

10. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 1, wherein, during said transition phase, particular frequency components of the front speaker output

increase relatively more than other frequency components of the front speaker output.

11. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 10, wherein outputs of said front and rear speakers are controlled during the transition phase such that the sound pressure level at an area adjacent the front seat is relatively constant.

12. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 10, wherein said transition phase is a first transition phase and, when said partitioned audio system is switched from said second mode of operation to said first mode of operation, a second transition phase is entered whereby an output level of said front speakers decreases while an output level of said rear speakers increases.

13. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 12, wherein, during said first transition phase, particular frequency components of the front speaker output increase relatively more than other frequency components of the front speaker output and, during said second transition phase, said particular frequency components of the front speaker output decrease relatively more than said other frequency components of the front speaker output.

14. A method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 11, wherein said transition phase is a first transition phase and, when said partitioned audio system is switched from said second mode of operation to said first mode of operation, a second transition phase is entered whereby an output level of said front speakers decreases while an output level of said rear speakers increases.

15. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 14, wherein, during said first transition phase, particular frequency components of the front speaker output

increase relatively more than other frequency components of the front speaker output and, during said second transition phase, said particular frequency components of the front speaker output decrease relatively more than said other frequency components of the front speaker output.

16. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 13, wherein the amount said particular frequency components change during said first and second transition phases is predetermined.

17. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 13, wherein the amount said particular frequency components change during said first and second transition phases is tuned to characteristics of the automobile.

18. The method for controlling a partitioned audio system according to claim 13, wherein the amount said front speaker output changes during said first and second transition phases depends, in part, upon user-selected settings of the audio system.